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SUBJECT: Jakarta B1/B2 Visa Validation Study

REF: 07 Jakarta 989

¶1. SUMMARY: The Consular Section of US Embassy Jakarta recently conducted a visa applicant validation study. The study covered B1/B2 visa issuances for the six-month period December 1, 2006, to May 31, 2007, and was based on a telephone survey followed by house visits and queries of the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Arrival-Departure Information System (ADIS). The overstay rate was 6.8 percent. The data showed a significant decrease in overstay rates in the latter half of the study period in comparison with the first half. The overstay rate approached the FY2007 target set in the 2010 Mission Strategic Plan and represents an improvement from last year's validation study results (Reftel). END SUMMARY.

Methodology

¶2. The study was restricted to B1/B2 issuances to Indonesian applicants; third country national (TCN) applicants were not included. The sample was selected from issuances during the six-month period December 1, 2006, to May 31, 2007. Thus, even if an individual had been issued at the end of May 2007, the individual should have returned to Indonesia before validations began in February 2008.

¶3. There were 10,947 B1/B2 issuances for the period. The selection was done in accordance with the instructions contained in the CA/FPP document "How to use the CCD reports and Excel Spreadsheet to generate random samples of visa applicants for use in a validation study". The number sampled (840 applicants) was based upon the FPP recommendation of a standard sample size of approximately 800 cases. This sample number provides a standard +/- 2.1 interval for an overstay rate of 10 percent as suggested by FPP.

¶4. CCD reports and the DS-156 paper visa application records of the individuals randomly selected were pulled and reviewed by a Conoff. He organized teams of FSNs to make phone calls to the 840 individuals. The phone survey left approximately 100 cases as "inconclusive". For inconclusive applicants outside of Jakarta, Conoffs used the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Arrival-Departure Information System (ADIS) to determine the status of the applicants. Teams of Consular Officers and FSNs then began a house-to-house canvass of the 27 inconclusive cases located in

Jakarta and the surrounding areas to determine the status of the individuals as either "returned", "never traveled" or "suspected overstay."

Findings

¶5. Table of findings:

Confirmed Overstay: 57 (6.8%)
Confirmed Return: 598 (71%)

Never Traveled: 185 (22%)

Total: 840 (100%)

16. Breakdown of Confirmed Overstay

Overstay Rate for Month of Visa Issuance:

December 2006 - 11.7 percent (15 total)

January 2007 -- 7.8 percent (13 total)

February 2007 - 11.7 percent (17 total)

March 2007 -- 5.0 percent (7 total)

April 2007 -- 3.0 percent (4 total)

May 2007 -- 0.8 percent (1 total)

Gender:

67 percent female (38 total, 14 unmarried, 19 married including 2 newlyweds, 5 minors)

33 percent male (19 total, 2 unmarried, 12 married, 5 minors)

Age:

19 percent under 20 years old (10 total, all single/minors, 5 boys/5 girls)

17 percent 20 - 30 years old (11 total - 9 female/2 male, 7 unmarried, 4 married including 2 newlyweds)

41 percent 30 - 50 years old (24 total - 15 female/ 9 male, 5 unmarried, 19 married)

22 percent over 50 years old (12 total- 9 female/3 male, 4 unmarried including 3 widows, 8 married)

JAKARTA 00001192 002 OF 002

Characteristics:

89 percent had no prior US travel (51 total)

98 percent were issued full validity visas (56 total)

11 percent had prior visa refusals (6 total)

----- Analysis -----

17. The data shows a trend of reduced overstays in the latter half of the study (March - May) after targeted training and structured guidance to adjudicating officers. For the full study period, two in three overstays excluding minors were married according to the DS-156. Also two in three overstays were women. (Note: The sample pool was evenly divided 50 percent male/ 50 percent female.) The breakdown of the genders of the overstays highlights an area for increased consideration. Young male applicants in Indonesia are subject to intense scrutiny - it appears female applicants may not be subject to enough scrutiny.

18. The proportion of individuals (one in five) who have never traveled, though lower than in last year's study (1 in 3) (Reftel) raises issues about intent. Most visa applicants in Jakarta state that they want to travel within one month of the interview. The individuals who never traveled may see having a valid US visa as a kind of insurance policy on political and economic instability or could be applicants whose plans changed. Alternatively, those who have never traveled may have been malafide applicants and are still waiting for the right time to begin a new life (as an overstay) in the US.

19. Outright fraud was suspected in 16 of the 57 confirmed overstays after attempting phone calls, examining the paper DS-156 and visiting the (often alleged) residence of the individual. Interestingly, the 27 individuals who were canvassed house-to-house came from all types of neighborhoods and socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds; they were not predominately from individuals usually deemed as higher risk applicants. The B visa adjusted refusal rate for Indonesians during the study period is 44 percent, higher than the FY2006 adjusted refusal rate of 35 percent (Reftel).

Conclusion

¶10. The current visa validation study for B1/B2 visa issuances revealed a 25 percent reduction in the overstay rate over the similar 2007 study for Embassy Jakarta -- 9.1 percent overstay rate last year and 6.8 percent this year (Reftel). During the second half of the 2008 study the overstay rate decreased significantly after adjudicating standards were tightened. Post recognizes that a telephone survey has weaknesses, but efforts were made to speak directly to the applicant. The survey also only detects that an individual is back in Indonesia when the study occurs - he or she may have indeed worked illegally or violated the period of stay granted by DHS. Post access to ADIS proved an invaluable resource in determining the travel history of applicants. ADIS helped resolve inconclusive cases and confirm overstays. Post acknowledges that even ADIS is not completely accurate, but coupled with other information, the resource helped confirm or disprove suspicions in many cases.

¶11. Consular management has discussed the findings with the adjudicating consular officers. Married applicants and female applicants are areas for renewed focus. The Consul General views the 7 percent overstay rate as a significant improvement from last year's results and an affirmation of the current adjudicating standards and emphasis on fraud prevention programs. The overstay rate from the study approached the target in the 2010 MSP of 6 percent for 2008. In particular, the overstay rate for the last 3 months of the study was an average of 2.9 percent, well within the MSP target.

HUME